



*Office of Public Affairs
U.S. Embassy, Apia.*

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NEW U.S. VISA SYSTEM INTRODUCED

The U.S. Embassy Apia will introduce a new visa application for people in Samoa beginning the week of December 11-15, 2006.

All applicants must log on to the Internet to complete the application form and get an appointment. All necessary information is on the website below. Please don't call or visit the Embassy.

Every three months the U.S. Embassy in Apia plans to have a consular officer from the U.S. Consulate General in Auckland travel to Apia to interview people who want to apply for U.S. visas.

"We are delighted to offer people in Samoa the opportunity to apply for a visa in Apia instead of having to travel to Auckland," said Ambassador Bill McCormick, U.S. Ambassador to Samoa.

Ambassador McCormick is looking forward to coming to Samoa to see the interviews and meet with visa applicants during the inaugural week of the new system.

"This is part of an ongoing process we are undertaking to improve the level of service that we offer to the people of Samoa."

A visiting consular officer will come to Apia for only one week every three months, so appointments will be limited. An applicant who doesn't get an appointment in December will still be able to apply for a visa in Auckland, as before, or wait to get an appointment for the next visit in March.

"We will need to evaluate our first week to see what lessons can be learned and how we can improve the process for the next time," Ambassador McCormick said.

"I also hope to meet with Prime Minister Tuilaepa while I am in Samoa. He has taken an active interest in the development of this process, and I will be pleased to discuss this system with him."

Complete instructions for applying for a U.S. visa in Samoa are available ONLY at the following website: http://newzealand.usembassy.gov/how_to_apply_-_for_samoans.html